

O 051505Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3861
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 000739

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [ENRG](#) [GG](#) [EU](#) [ZK](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: SAKASHVILI IN SWEDEN: "I REGRET NOTHING"

REF: STOCKHOLM 719

SUMMARY

1. On October 30-31, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili visited Stockholm for talks with Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt (FM Bildt was in Afghanistan at the time). The visit, planned in 2007, originally was to sign a bilateral investment protection agreement to encourage Swedish investments in Georgia. The Russian-Georgia conflict deviated the visit's agenda, however, and was the focus of Saakashvili's remarks at the Swedish Foreign Affairs Institute on October 30. Unwilling to temper his criticism of Russia, he expressed confidence about his actions in the war, but was receptive to criticism about his domestic policies. End summary.

Georgia Part of Europe

2. In his prepared remarks at the Swedish Institute of Foreign Affairs October 30, Saakashvili emphasized that the Georgian "foreign policy agenda reflects that Georgia is a part of Europe." He added that "Georgia needs to integrate more with Europe and reform to further improve its political and judicial systems."

Russia-Georgia Conflict

-- Saakashvili said that "the EU and the U.S. has noticed what was in the making in March," as the "Russian attack was well-planned." Europe must not accept this like they did during Nazi Germany's invasion of the Sudeten region..."once you lower the threshold and cross that line there is no going back."

-- Without the EU's response the conflict could have been worse. "Once all EU leaders made tough remarks on Russia the conflict halted, however there was a lack of strong EU leadership."

-- "Our choices during the conflict were fundamentally the right ones. If you have doubts on the war, we encourage an investigation. But this is not about Georgia anymore: Russia has issues with everyone."

Dialogue with Iran

-- "We need Russia to stop Iran," Saakashvili said, and "Russia is a heavily armed country with nuclear weapons willing to destroy its neighbors." Saying that talks with Iran should be "explored," he added: "I have been there many times myself and there are great prospects in Iran, especially when you talk to the young people."

European Energy

-- Saakashvili said that Georgia is a stable country for energy transportation. "A Russian energy monopoly is a dangerous situation and Europe is increasing its dependence. The war was a wakeup call for new transit projects. Central Asian countries have understood the seriousness and launched new projects. We need a strong strategy and the EU Commissioner for Energy has come to Georgia to set out such a strategy."

NATO

-- Georgia's membership in NATO "is up to Germany, so ask Angela Merkel...We cannot protect our territory against the Russian army."

Freedom of the Press

-- "We are supporters of freedom of expression; but remember that

this is a learning process for us as well."

WOOD